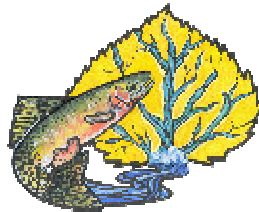


Santa Fe National Forest Fisheries Program Annual Report 2005



United States Department of Agriculture * Forest Service * Santa Fe National Forest

I came to the Santa Fe National Forest in 2000 to start up a fish program that had been dead for eight years. When I arrived, I had put forward an ambitious timetable associated with a long list of goals. I tend to dream too big. I just never told my partners and staff that. And what has happened in the last five years is amazing.

On this our 5th anniversary, we have exceeded my expectations with an education program that has personally met with over 20,000 people; with a stream inventory program that has mapped over 250 miles of habitat; with a restoration effort that has improved floodplains, wetlands, and streams across 1,000 acres and 40 miles of stream; with a temperature monitoring program that has studied 32% of the Forest's stream miles. And this is just a small sum of the work the Fish and Education team has accomplished in five years. All of it is credited to the staff that has put up with me over the years as well as our committed partners. Too numerous to mention here, you can get a flavor of the extensive support we receive by perusing this report. As for our accomplishments over the years, previous reports can be found at our recently updated website (www.fs.fed.us/r3/sfe/fish).

This is all being done with so few internal dollars. In the beginning of 2005, it appeared that it was going to be bleak. With the budget being the lowest it had been since I had arrived, it looked like I was going to have to lay off my whole staff. In spring, I began pursuing outside funding. We were awarded Centennial of Service Challenge funds for our Respect the Rio program (which now is being highlighted in front of Congress as one of the exemplary programs funded by Centennial Service). Not only did this fund my staff, it shored up funding for many other programs across two ranger districts, allowing us to conduct restoration and education we had previously only dreamed of doing. While this was a large boost, I was still shy of fully funding my staff. Then three different funding sources came across my desk, which would entail our Forest program conducting stream inventory on five other National Forests across three states. Again, we were off to the races. I attribute our multiple avenues of financial support as an accolade for our hard work, unbiased professionalism and garnered respect.

Road weary and data clogged, the Fish and Education Team completed another remarkable year, which I believe exemplifies what the program has accomplished in its five years. Kimberly and Chuck's great leadership, creativity and untiring work are the key behind the program's success.

We lost two key team members this year. Sarah Eddy and Kavita Krishna left behind a great legacy of report writing and data analysis. Sarah championed our stream temperature monitoring program while Kavita was a big part of the growth in our education program. We move on without Kavita and Sarah, but we would be fools to think that they are not sorely missed.

While 2006 looks like it will continue the trend of abysmal internal funding, we are confident that it will be another milestone year of data collection and restoration thanks to our partners who continue to be our greatest funders and supporters.

The excitement is here and we hope you will be part of it.

-Sean Ferrell
Forest Fish Biologist
12 December 2005

The Illustrrious Staff



Sean Ferrell, Forest Fisheries and Education Biologist

National Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Coordinator; Regional Stream Habitat Inventory Coordinator



Chuck Dentino, Fisheries Biologist

Stream Inventory Quality Control Coordinator; Assistant Forest Fish Biologist; Habitat Restoration Leader



Kimberly Kelly, Forest Education Coordinator

Respect the Rio Education Coordinator; Volunteer Coordinator



Kavita Krishna, Biological Technician

Assistant Education Coordinator; Contact Ranger Team Leader; Verde Stream Team Leader

The Field Crew

Fossil Stream Team

Chuck Dentino, Team Leader

Tatum Webb, Assistant and Co-writer



Tatum.

Gila Stream Team

Nara Fleming, Team Leader

Kavita Krishna, Assistant



L to R: Nara and Kavita.

Hermosa Stream Team

Chuck Dentino, Team Leader

Jared Newell, Assistant

David Moeser, Assistant



L to R: David M. and Jared.

Peñas Negras Stream Team

Chuck Dentino, Team Leader

Melissa Potter, Assistant and Writer



Melissa.

Verde Stream Team

Kavita Krishna, Team Leader

Nara Fleming, Assistant

Julie Spear, Assistant



Julie.

Chihuahuēños Stream Team

Chuck Dentino, Team Leader

Nara Fleming, Assistant and Co-writer

Casiano Andres Salazar, Hutton Student

David Garcia, Hutton Student



L to R: Chuck, Andres, Nara and David G.



Greer.



Jennifer.

Respect the Rio Contact Ranger Team

Kimberly Kelly, Team Coordinator

Kavita Krishna, Team Leader

Greer McGettrick, SCA Intern

Jennifer Seaman, SCA Intern

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Jack Ferrell

Gerald Kelly

Dan DeVall

David Wilson

Carmen Conklin

Joseph Shepherd

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Fred Corbalis, Jr.

James Buckmelter

Tyler Laurenti



Ron.



Jack.

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Charles Mosher

Peter Blemel

Insun & Hyunju Blemel

Trisha Breslin

Fred Breslin

Francis Peter

Bob Day

Don Hurst

Doug Loescher

Margaret Gaylor



Fish Team 2005. L to R: Greer, Jennifer, Sean, Nara, Kavita, Chuck (not pictured: Kimberly, Tatum, Melissa).

Partners and Contributors

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 Erica Nevins
 Ronnie Maes
 Jo Wargo
 Ray Borrego
 Ronnie Herrera
 Peter Dudley
 David McCray
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 James Foley
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 Jemez Valley Credit Union
 Jemez Valley Public Schools
 La Cueva Volunteer Fire Department
 Doc Minter
 Angela Burnham
 Morris Taylor
 Lewis Realty
 Acorn Naturalists
 Del Pueblo
 Wal-Mart
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 Darren Toya
 Joseph Madalena
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 Jemez Watershed Group
 Meridian Institute
 Environmental Ed Assoc. NM
 Santa Fe Watershed Association
 Albuquerque Open Space Division
 Albuquerque Water Festival
 Santa Fe Water Festival
 Socorro Water Festival
 Socorro Public Schools
 Los Alamos High School
 Coronado High School
 River Source
 Conservation Education, WO
 Okanogan/Wenatchee NF's
 Umatilla National Forest
 Becca Wassell
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 Chuti Fiedler
 Columbia River Gorge Nat'l Scenic Area
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 Albert Sillas
 Prescott National Forest
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 David Moeser
 San Juan National Forest
 Arnold Atkins
 Kira Finkler
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 Sangre de Cristo Mountain Works
 REI
 Bandelier National Monument
 Steve Fettig
 New Mexico State Forestry
 Jemez Pueblo - Resource Protection
 Division
 Army Corps of Engineers
 Public Lands Interpretive Assoc.
 Adam Rankin
 Albuquerque Journal
 Natural Resource Conservation Service
 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
 Nambe Pueblo
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 Santa Clara Pueblo
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 Tiffany Vanosdall
 Danielle Shurn
 Marcial Martinez
 Greg Huey
 Centennial Service Challenge
 Trail Partners
 Friends of the Sandia Mountains
 Sandia Wilderness Info Specialists
 East Mountain Trail Riders
 New Mexico Habitat Stamp Program
 Paul Lewis
 Vacas/Senorito Permittees
 Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument
 Steve Riley



Cecilia Tree Felling Team – L to R: Salomon Martinez, John Dixon, and Ted Chacon

Stream Inventory

Santa Fe National Forest implemented its fifth successful season of stream inventory, utilizing the regional protocol for cold-water streams. The Santa Fe National Forest co-sponsored and hosted this year's training session. The training was attended by Santa Clara, Laguna and Nambe Pueblos, TEAMS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Mexico Environment Department, Carson National Forest, and Forest Guardians. Chuck Dentino also led a Region 1/4 stream habitat inventory protocol training for the San Juan National Forest and TEAMS.



Chihuahueños Creek. L to R: Andres, David G., and Chuck.

Chihuahueños Creek (9.5 miles)
Rito Peñas Negras (11.1 miles)
Fossil Creek (4.6 miles), *Tonto/Coconino National Forests, AZ*
East Fork Hermosa Creek (3.5 miles), *San Juan National Forest, CO*
Verde River (12.8 miles), *Prescott National Forest, AZ*
Gila River (10.5 miles), *Gila National Forest, NM*



Rito Peñas Negras. Melissa.

The inventory gathers hard numbers on habitat components related to stream condition, and it's repeatable as a monitoring tool. The Santa Fe National Forest Fisheries Program completed **52 miles** of stream inventory on **6 National Forests** across **2 Regions**:



West Fork Gila. L to R: Nara and Kavita.

In addition, the Forest has finished **11 stream inventory reports** and has three more lurking in their final stages. This includes reports for Durango Mountain Resort, Gila and Prescott National Forests. Kavita Krishna wrote a thorough report on Polvadera Creek from last year's data collection. Kavita did an exemplary job in producing this report, creating an updated template for future reports. Reports are used to assist in NEPA documents as well as for planning watershed restoration and Rio Grande cutthroat trout recovery.

Capulin Canyon Río Grande Cutthroat Trout Re-introduction Project

In 1996, the Dome Fire burned over the Capulin Canyon Watershed. Rains that followed delivered ash into the waters, killing off all aquatic biota. Since that time, the stream has recovered and been recolonized with a healthy aquatic insect population. In 2005, a team of biologists from the Santa Fe National Forest, New Mexico Game and Fish and Bandelier National Monument completed an intensive electroshocking survey which concluded that no fish had re-occupied. With a barrier to upstream migration confirmed, the three agencies have formulated a re-introduction plan that will begin early spring 2006, populating nearly **8 miles** of excellent habitat. The Forest is hopeful to include a stream habitat inventory as part of that effort.



Capulin Canyon.

Stream Temperature Monitoring

The fish program entered its fifth year of intensive forest-wide monitoring of stream temperatures. Temperature monitoring equipment, called a Stowaway Tidbit, is the size of a quarter and can stay in the stream year-round. 12 Tidbits were deployed in **9 streams** across the Forest, measuring temperature for **61 miles** of stream every hour from the beginning of June until October.

Early analysis indicated similar trends we have witnessed in previous years. Prior to her departure, Sarah Eddy championed an analysis on three years of data, authoring an extensive Forest-wide monitoring summary report. Results indicate that a majority of streams reach lethal temperature limits for cutthroat trout. We are beginning to marry our habitat data with this information to show how habitat conditions are affecting stream temperature.



Rio Nambe. Stowaway tidbit.

Fish Distribution

Snorkeling continued to be a mainstay for determining fish composition and distribution on the Santa Fe National Forest. This protocol was introduced to the Santa Fe in 2001 and offers opportunities to teach others about how fish interact with their habitat.

Individuals from the Santa Fe and Carson National Forests, Bureau of Land Management, and New Mexico Trout were trained over the summer season.

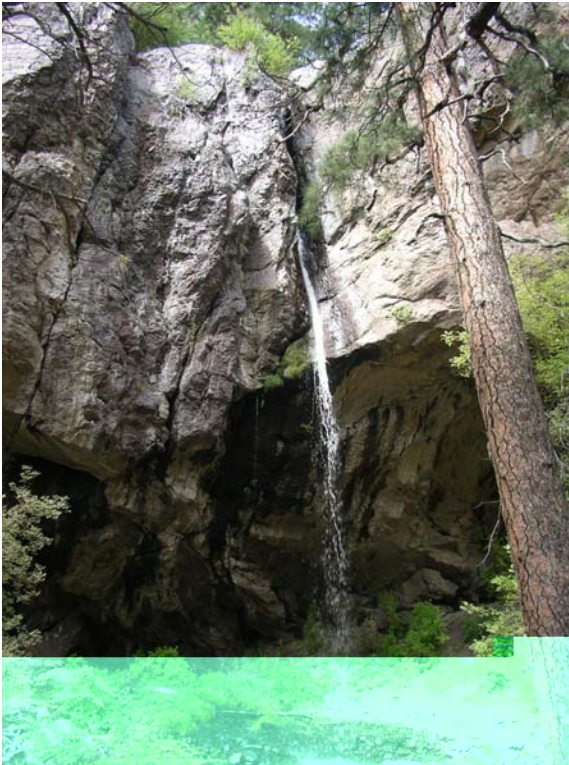


Peralta Canyon.

Despite some extensive equipment failure, this upstream snorkeling methodology paved the way for nearly **18 miles** of mapping streams for fish composition and distribution across the Forest.

Chihuahueros Creek
Peralta Canyon
Rio de las Vacas

Rito Anastacio
Rio Puerco



Sanchez Canyon Falls.

In addition, **52 miles** of stream across **11 canyons** in the Jemez Mountains were reconnaissanced and mapped for fish presence. A previously undocumented population of Rio Grande cutthroat trout was located in Medio Dia. A re-introduction opportunity presented itself in Sanchez Canyon (another victim from the Dome Fire).

Peralta Canyon
Medio Dia Canyon
Pines Canyon
Spruce Canyon
Silva Canyon
Capulin Canyon
Alamo Canyon
Sanchez Canyon
Cañoncito Seco
Cañones Creek
Rio del Oso

San Pedro Parks Wilderness Monitoring



Rio Puerco de Grande.

The team focused on snorkel monitoring and water chemistry, assessing conditions on stream habitat, water quality and Rio Grande cutthroat trout populations. Non-native German brown trout were observed in Rio de las Vacas. Upper limits of fish populations were determined for Rito de las Perchas and for the Rio Puerco de Chama. A fish barrier was mapped on Rio Puerco de Grande and only native cutthroat were observed upstream. Arizona willow, a regional sensitive species, was checked for vigor and it was found that exclosures protecting the species are dilapidated and are in need of repair.

After its inaugural beginning in 2001, an elaborate report was completed and follow-up monitoring began. Two one week-long intensive efforts were conducted this year by the fisheries and watershed program, covering nearly **7.5 miles** of riparian area in Rio de las Vacas and both Rio Puerco Watersheds within the 40,000-acre San Pedro Parks Wilderness.



Rio de las Vacas .

This effort will continue on an annual basis, assisting range and recreation with the implementation of their programs. An updated monitoring report is forthcoming in 2006. Many thanks to the New Mexico Trout volunteers, Ron Loehman and Margaret Gaylor as well as New Mexico Environment Department for their technical support.

Program Support

The Forest Fisheries program continues to develop and strengthen relationships with other programs and has provided input into on-going and upcoming projects. The projects are sponsored by recreation, forestry, fire, watershed and range, including:

- East Jemez 5 Allotments
- EA/AMP
- The Four Allotments Analysis
- Resumidero Campground EA
- San Antonio Campground
- Improvement Project
- Capitol Christmas Tree
- La Jara WUI

- Santa Fe National Forest Website
- San Pedro Parks Wilderness Map update
- Buckman Water Diversion Project EIS
- Ponderosa Water Line
- Gallina WUI EA
- Cecilia Creek Watershed Restoration Project

San Antonio Creek Riparian Thinning

San Antonio Creek was inventoried in 2002 and was noted as having low pool volume and large woody debris. In an effort to improve stream habitat while reducing the probability of crown fire carrying through the riparian area, a thinning project was designed and implemented by the fisheries program and was awarded funding through the Centennial of Service Challenge. Conifers were dropped to allow for an increased growth of willow and sedges which provide streamside shade and bank stabilization. Dropped trees will also deflect cattle traffic away from the stream and wet areas.



San Antonio Creek. Chuck.

130 trees (12"-23.9" diameter ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and spruce) were added to the stream channel and floodplain as well as **46** (<12" diameter) **ponderosa pine trees**. **4.2 miles** of stream habitat and **138 acres** of riparian habitat were improved in the San Antonio Creek corridor. Much success of the project is in great part due to Jo Wargo, Chuck Dentino, Peter Dudley and David McCray.



San Antonio Creek. Before.



San Antonio Creek. After.

Rio Grande Chub and Sucker Symposium

Rio Grande chub and Rio Grande sucker are proposed to be listed as a sensitive species in the Southwestern Region. With little known about these two species, the fish program championed and organized a symposium to bring together the small group of researchers and recovery biologists who have worked with these two species to share their wealth of knowledge. **Eight presentations** were delivered to an audience of **25** agency and non-agency biologists, land managers, researchers and educators from across 4 states. Published papers and educational materials were provided to the audience. A CD is being developed that will have the presentations and papers as well as a map of historic and current distribution of the two species in New Mexico and Colorado. We hope that this will begin energy behind a concerted recovery effort.

Cecilia Creek Watershed Restoration Project

As part of a larger watershed restoration effort, the fish program was invited to design and implement a riparian thinning project along the banks of Cecilia Creek. Cecilia is small but has a remnant population of Rio Grande cutthroat trout.

In order to reduce the probability of a catastrophic fire and increase large wood structure and pool volume, conifers were thinned within the Cecilia Creek floodplain. **25** large ponderosa pine and Engelmann spruce were directionally felled to best improve stream and floodplain conditions while over **50 small trees** were cut to minimize the possibility of a crown fire. Over **1.25 miles** of stream habitat and **30 acres** of riparian habitat were improved.



Cecilia Creek. Salomon

John Dixon, Zone Hydrologist for Coyote and Española Ranger Districts, has been instrumental in making this project happen from conception to receiving grant awards through the Centennial of Service Challenge and the Habitat Stamp Program.



Cecilia Creek. Before.



Cecilia Creek. After. L to R: John and Ted.

In addition to the riparian thinning, the uplands were thinned, roads are being decommissioned and closed, livestock exclosure fencing is being improved, trailhead parking is being created, and the watershed is being used as a classroom to learn about ecology and restoration in the local high school. As part of that effort, Kimberly Kelly and John have been developing an educational kiosk designed by students.

The riparian thinning portion of the project was immensely successful in great part due to Salomon Martinez and Ted Chacon.

Education

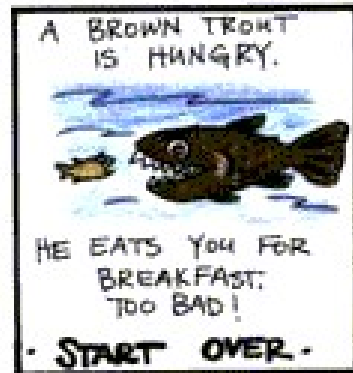


Campfire Program.

The education program was led by Kimberly Kelly with great assistance from Kavita Krishna. The education program reached over **670 students** and **134 adults** (including **40 teachers**). The education crew facilitated **40 programs** (outside of Respect the Rio). In addition, over **2,800** public contacts were made, totaling over **3,600** people.

Schools included Coronado High School, Los Alamos High School, Socorro Elementary Schools, and Jemez Valley public schools. Students learned about native fish, Forest Service careers, fire ecology, water quality, healthy watersheds, and recreation. The education program also was a key collaborator at the Middle Rio Grande Children's Water Festival, Santa Fe Children's Water Festival, Socorro Water Festival, Walatowa Earth Day, Jemez Springs Water Fair, and Capitol Christmas Tree.

The Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Life Cycle game continues to be a popular item and has been translated into Spanish. A new CD version will soon be available with the bilingual game board, additional classroom activities and a curriculum that matches State teaching standards. To date, we have mailed out over **100 copies** of the CD to various teachers, educators, and trout enthusiasts.



RGCT Life Cycle Game.

The Fish Photo of the Pay Period continues to show office workers the places, plants, and animals they don't get to see and district employees other beautiful pieces of our Forest. In 2005, there were **27 Fish Photos**. Visit the Fish Photo archive at www.fs.fed.us/r3/sfe/fish/fishphoto. By the end of 2005, there will be **115 photos** for you to peruse in the archive.



RGCT Life Cycle Game. Kavita.

Native Fish Aquarium Display

Rio Grande chubs were added to our 180-gallon aquarium completing a native fish assemblage of Rio Grande cutthroat trout, Rio Grande suckers, Rio Grande chubs and longnose dace. As part of the display, two informative panels had wooden frames added, and the panels now reside on opposite sides of the aquarium (we call this Stage One).



Rio Grande sucker.



Stage 1 Display.

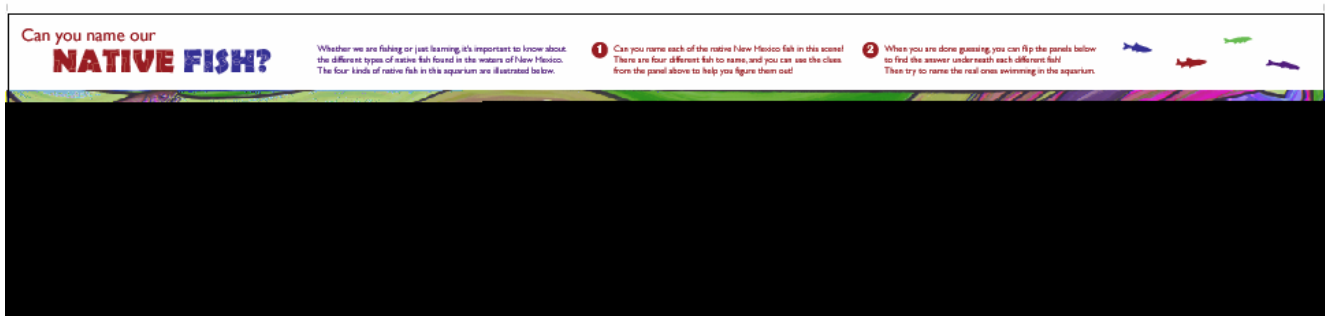
Stage two of the display is near completion. SCA intern Jennifer Seaman created an awesome display featuring the four native fish in an interactive format. Volunteers Gerald Kelly and Dan DeVall built the frame that will house the interactive interpretive display while Sean Ferrell stained and lacquered the piece. When completed, the display will be located in front of the aquarium.

The last stage of the display is a beautiful, framed oil painting of a river setting by Debra Robasky which will be hung above the aquarium.

This project has received funding from New Mexico Trout, NMED, EPA, and the Centennial of Service Challenge. The trout have been provided by the kind folks at the New Mexico Game and Fish's Seven Springs Hatchery. The fish are fed by the enthusiastic staff at the Walatowa Visitor Center, and the aquarium is maintained by Kimberly and her education staff.



Rio Grande cutthroat trout.



Stage 2 Display.

Respect the Río - Education



www.fs.fed.us/rtr

RtR is a combination of environmental education, watershed restoration, and public involvement that empowers local communities and forest users to participate in watershed restoration. This year's program was entirely funded by a Centennial of Service Challenge grant.

SCA interns Greer McGettrick and Jennifer Seaman contacted **2,306 people** this summer during our contact ranger program. Dispersed campers along the Rios Guadalupe, Cebolla, and las Vacas learned about current watershed projects and how to be river-friendly campers.

508 people attended one of our **19 interpretive campfire programs** held on Friday and Saturday nights at the Jemez Falls and Redondo Campgrounds. Topics included animal tracks & signs, bats, beavers, birds, butterflies, constellations, dragonflies, and Rio Grande cutthroat trout.



Movie Ad.

After three years, Respect the Río (RtR) is rapidly becoming a successful education and watershed restoration program. Not only has the program reached over **7,000 people**, but it has also provided a common goal for disciplines such as wildlife/fisheries, recreation, hydrology, and range on the Jemez and Cuba Ranger Districts.



Contact Ranger Program. Greer.

Many more individuals (possibly **200,000!**) have been reached through a proactive multi-media campaign. Two ads were shown in the Century Rio 24 theaters while moviegoers waited for the movie to start.

Late spring saw the publication of our "Be a River-Friendly Camper" in both English and Spanish. Since then, over 2,500 fliers have been distributed.

Other media include a website, newspaper articles, interpretive panels, temporary tattoos, and a native fish aquarium at the Walatowa Visitor Center.

Respect the Río – Restoration



L to R: Kim, Chuck and Nara.

Chuck Dentino led this mammoth effort. Over **16,000 feet** of buck-n-pole fence was constructed to create a **5-acre** exclosure and protect **3.5 miles** of stream and riparian from vehicle access. Approximately **212 acres** of riparian and floodplain habitat were protected from off road vehicle impacts. Approximately **15 campsites** were designated with pullouts and walk through areas to protect heavily impacted stream banks.

One of the three major components of Respect the Río is on-the-ground restoration efforts. The Fisheries Program spearheaded one of many on-going restoration tasks.

In the Jemez Watershed, riparian, floodplain and wetland conditions are being degraded by off-road vehicle use, dispersed recreation and in some instances cattle grazing. With an off-road vehicle closure being implemented, buck-n-pole fence lines were constructed to control vehicle traffic patterns and help enforce the closure. Further fencing was designed to exclude both vehicles and cattle from entering a newly created wetland.



New Mexico Trout volunteers.

This project would not have been possible without the help from New Mexico Trout and Trout Unlimited that provided financial support and well as their hard labor during fence construction. The YCC crew was also instrumental in fence construction.



YCC Crew.

Exotic Species Removal

In June, our active partners at New Mexico Trout discovered that non-native German brown trout had somehow found their way into Rio Grande cutthroat trout waters in Rio Cebolla. This invasion is a setback to our recovery efforts, but in a joint venture, Forest Service-sponsored crews rallied to remove **1,561 brown trout** in two intensive electroshocking efforts. In partnership with New Mexico Game and Fish, Bureau of Land Management, and New Mexico Trout, we were able to give the cutthroat population some breathing room while we strategize for a long-term solution. In all, nearly **3,000 brown trout** were removed from a **5-mile** stretch of Rio Cebolla.



German brown trout and Rio Grande cutthroat trout.

Wild & Scenic Río Chama Fish Monitoring



Río Chama. New Mexico Game & Fish.

In order to support our Wild and Scenic River Management Plan, the Río Chama was the site of our inaugural attempt to monitor fish populations through the entire Wild and Scenic corridor. This large-scale effort involved Bureau of Land Management, Carson National Forest, and New Mexico Game and Fish.

Through intensive gillnet and electroshocking surveys, we gathered information on fish populations that spanned over **22 miles** of river and three primary federal land managers. Our intent is to return annually in order to monitor population trend and how management of the river is affecting the fish. BLM's Greg Gustina spearheaded this ambitious effort.

Kid's Fishing Day



In July, **213 children** ages 4-11 years and over **150 adults** turned out for the Forest's 15th Annual Kids' Fishing Day at Seven Springs State Fish Hatchery. This event was jointly sponsored by New Mexico Trout, New Mexico Game & Fish, local businesses and Jemez/Cuba Resource Area.

Each participant received a passport and goody bag. If they participated in six of the seven educational booths, they received a T-shirt commemorating the day. Respect the Rio mascots' Carlos Cutthroat and Perl Stonefly were present to greet participants.



Carlos and John Dixon.



Gyotaku with Danielle Montes and Erica Nevins

Booths managed by the Forest Service, New Mexico Game & Fish, New Mexico Trout, Doc Minter, and Rio Puerco Management Committee included:

- Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Life Cycle Game
- Stream Simulator
- Gyotaku
- Range Land Health Kiosk
- Fly Tying
- Beaver Adaptations
- Aquatic Insects



RGCT Life Cycle Game with Jennifer and Greer.

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